

152

No

J

So
home
ago,
H
build
that
H
wore
TH
that
in hi
Su
of a
and,

THE JESSE JAMES STORIES

A WEEKLY DEALING WITH THE DETECTION OF CRIME

Issued Weekly. By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at New York Post Office by STREET & SMITH, 238 William St., N. Y.

No. 86.

Price, Five Cents.

JESSE JAMES' TUG OF WAR

OR
DARING DAN IN DISGUISE



HERE COMES JESSE JAMES AT LAST. NOW FOR THE TUG OF WAR, FOR IT IS HIS LIFE OR MINE!" SAID DARING DAN, THE DISGUISED YOUNG DETECTIVE, AS THE BANDIT KING CAME IN SIGHT.

THE JESSE JAMES STORIES

A WEEKLY DEALING WITH THE DETECTION OF CRIME

Issued Weekly. By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the N. Y. Post Office, by STREET & SMITH, 238 William St., N. Y. Entered according to Act of Congress in the year 1902, in the Office of the Librarian of Congress, Washington, D. C.

No. 86.

NEW YORK, December 27, 1902.

Price Five Cents.

JESSE JAMES' TUG OF WAR;

OR,

Daring Dan in Disguise.

By W. B. LAWSON.

J. J. MILLER,
DEALER IN CIGARS & TOBACCO
We Sell and Exchange Cigars,
320 East 18th St. Kansas City, Mo.

CHAPTER I.

DARING DAN, THE YOUNG DETECTIVE.

Seated in a pleasant room in a comfortable little home, in a Kansas town, one night a number of years ago, was a youth of eighteen years of age.

He was a handsome fellow, well formed, athletic in build and had an expression upon his face that showed that he was one to do and dare.

He was plainly dressed, and, though in the house, wore his slouch hat.

The youth was studying a map by the light of a lamp that stood by the table, and he seemed much interested in his work.

Suddenly steps were heard without, there was a click of a gate as it closed, then footfalls upon the piazza, and, entering the room, came three men.

The leader of these men was a tall man of middle age, dressed in a corduroy suit, his pants stuck in his top boots and wearing a slouch hat.

Behind him came a gentleman, who had the appearance of being a well-to-do merchant of the town.

The third man was dressed much like the first, with top boots and slouch hat, with smooth shaven, darkly browned face, and might be a cattle rancher, for that was a cattle country.

"Well, Dan, my boy," said the first one to enter, "I have brought Cashier Boyce, of the bank, and Bradley Dean, whom you also know, and who has lately been the prisoner of Jesse James in his stronghold and held for ransom by the outlaw."

The newcomers greeted Dan Carrol pleasantly, and the one mentioned as Cashier Boyce remarked:

THE JESSE JAMES STORIES.

"Well, Dan, I am glad that you got your position as a detective on the Pinkerton force; but in going on the hunt for Jesse James and his outlaws, you are undertaking a very dangerous, yes, desperate work."

"I understand that fully, Mr. Boyce, but I was with Scott Durham the night he was killed by Jesse James, or a man who claimed to be the outlaw chief."

"He shot my horse also, and robbed both Scott and myself."

"When I reached home, you know, the same man claiming to be Jesse James had attempted to rob my father, who had resisted him and been shot down before the eyes of my sister, Ella."

"You were along also, Mr. Boyce, when I went with sister Ella to Chicago, and we were held up in going to the railroad station on Bill Dudley's coach by the same man, who also claimed to be Jesse James."

"Fortunately I was able to hold the winning hand on that occasion, from my position on top of the coach among the baggage and again when he held us up for the second time."

"It was to avenge Scott Durham and my father that I carried me to Chicago to enter Pinkerton's force."

"I have done so, and you observe that I have my badge as a secret service officer," and the youth opened his coat and displayed a silver badge upon his breast, the badge of a special detective.

"On my way back on the coach, Mr. Boyce, Driver Dudley, here, informed me that it was not Jesse James who killed Scott Durham or my father, or again held the coach up on the way to the railroad station; so, before starting out on my work, I wish to learn the full facts of the case, and, not desiring to attract attention by my return home, where I am so well known, I have sought a retreat in Driver Dudley's home, and he promised to bring both you and Rancher Dean here to see me, that I might fully understand the situation."

"Yes, Dan, and here we are, and if you are going to undertake this work, which I regret on account of your youth and its dangers, we wish you to go upon it with your eyes open to all that you will have to encounter," said Cashier Boyce.

"Yes, my young friend," put in Bradley Dean, the

rancher, "I will be very glad to tell you my story of my capture by the outlaws, being taken to their stronghold and held for ransom."

"Driver Dudley has told me also that you claim that the man who held Scott and myself up that night, killed him and robbed both of us, and later attacked my father's home and took his life, was not Jesse James."

"It was not," said Bradley Dean, firmly.

"And you also claim that it was not Jesse James who held up Driver Dudley's coach on the way to the station that day?"

"It was not," again repeated Bradley Dean.

"Have you proof of this, Mr. Dean?" asked the youth.

"I have the proof of my own eyesight and senses," was the answer.

"Please tell me when you were captured," Dan asked.

"I was captured one night in my own home by a band of Jesse James' men. They did me no harm, but carried me blindfolded to their stronghold, which we reached after riding all night and part of the next day."

"Once within the retreat, the blindfold was taken off my eyes, and I was led to the room of Jesse James, who was wounded in some attack that he had made a few days before and had just reached his stronghold."

"A doctor was with him, and said, that as there was danger of his going into a fever he must not excite himself."

"Jesse James told me very quietly that he had sent to have me captured to hold for ransom, and that I must pay him five thousand dollars to regain my liberty."

"Finding that I could do nothing else, I at last agreed to try and raise the sum for him by a certain date."

"The next day he promised to see me again, and I went to his room under a guard to find that he was raving in delirium from a high fever."

"My case was therefore put off, and it was several months afterward before he was again able to see me."

"In the meantime the papers that they got at the stronghold were filled with accounts of your having been held up by Jesse James, your friend, Scott Durham, killed, and both of you robbed, and also that your

father had been attacked the same night in his own home, shot down, and also robbed of a small sum of money, after which the robber had escaped.

"The papers claimed that it was Jesse James that did this, and that he so claimed himself, both to you and at your home as well.

"Later came the news of the hold up of our friend here, Bill Dudley's coach, in which you again played a prominent part.

"It was also claimed that the one who held up the coach twice in the same day was none other than Jesse James.

"I knew, however, that both these reports, bad as he is, belied the man, for he was laid up with wounds and fever in his own stronghold, kept there by the severe attack of illness.

"When I again saw him, he was a wreck of his former self; he looked wretchedly, after his severe illness; but his mind was clear once more, he was recuperating rapidly, and he seemed to regret that I had been so long held a prisoner in his stronghold, but said that it could not be helped, owing to his sickness.

"He told me that I might write a letter to my friends in this town, telling them of my safety, and that it would take five thousand dollars to pay for my ransom, at the same time stating how the money could be sent to a certain place and deposited there for me to find when I was escorted to the spot by guards.

"I wrote the letter, the money was placed where I requested that it should be, and I went with my guards to the spot.

"I paid them the money and was released, and that night I returned to my home.

"The next day I came into town here, and told my story to Bill Dudley, Cashier Boyce and others.

"That is what I have to tell you, Dan."

"When was it you were captured?" asked the youth.

"It was on June 15th."

"And you saw Jesse James in his stronghold on what date?"

"June 16th."

"And he was laid up with his wounds then?"

"He was."

"And it was on June 18th that I was held up and that Scott Durham and my father were killed."

"Yes."

"And what day was it that you were released from the outlaw stronghold, Mr. Dean?"

"August 20th."

"And Jesse James was then a wreck of his former self, you say?"

"Yes."

"Then he cannot have been the man that held me up and killed my father and Scott, nor can he have been the man that held up your coach, Driver Dudley, for all this was done at the time that you, Mr. Dean, were a prisoner in the outlaw stronghold; but I have sworn to avenge those murders, to track down Jesse James, and I shall go upon his trail and also upon the trail of the one whose life I am determined to have.

"I cannot doubt your story, Mr. Dean, and do not, but my duty is plain, and I shall start at once to work as a detective upon the track of the man whom I have sworn to hunt down," said the young sleuth with great determination.

CHAPTER II.

DAN TAKES THE TRAIL.

Fully two hours did Cashier Boyce and Rancher Bradley Dean spend in the home of Driver Bill Dudley, talking to the brave boy who had become a detective.

The cashier informed Dan that the bank had deposited to his account one thousand dollars, which it had paid for his having saved its money the day of the hold up of Dudley's coach, the youth having prevented the robbery of the passengers by his gallant act.

The cashier then continued:

"The sum which the supposed Jesse James was also forced to give up, which he claimed to be his own money, and which no owner was found for, was also placed to your account, Dan, so that you have twenty-five hundred dollars in our bank for you to draw upon when needed.

"Now, my boy, in the work that you are starting

THE JESSE JAMES STORIES.

upon if you need more, you have only to write me to that effect, and you will get it."

"And I will chip in, also," said Rancher Dean.

"Me too," Bill Dudley added, "and I'll help in any way that I can besides."

"Let me explain," said Rancher Dean, "that no man is more anxious to see Jesse James hanged than I am; but at the same time, he is not the one that did the killing of your father and of your friend, and who robbed you."

"Those crimes he is at least guiltless of, but his outlaw acts have placed a large price upon him, dead or alive, and I am more than willing to help you in any way in my power."

"To prove this, let me tell you that I have a splendid horse, an animal that can outrun a deer, and can last as long in a rapid chase, while I also have a handsome Mexican saddle and bridle which I used in Mexico, and I wish you to accept the horse and outfit as a present from me."

Dan knew the horse well as Black Bess, the fleetest animal in the county. He was delighted and accepted the present in the same spirit that Bradley Dean had offered it.

"If I can't capture Jesse James," he said, with a smile, "I can at least get away from him."

"Yes, and overtake him if in a chase, for, though he rides splendid horses, I don't believe there is one in Kansas that can run side by side with Black Bess in a race," Bradley Dean remarked.

The cashier and the rancher soon after took their leave, and Driver Dudley, who was an old bachelor, and his young guest, Detective Dan, talked over the work in hand until late into the night.

The next morning Black Bess was sent to Driver Dudley's stables, all saddled and bridled as the rancher had promised.

Dan had gotten together his equipments, a pair of saddle bags, a stout Navajo blanket, a large rubber blanket, extra clothing, and all that he would need, not to speak of a pair of fine revolvers, and short, but long range, repeating rifle.

"I am going to take the trail, armed for bear," he

said to Driver Dudley, and when he rode forth that night from the coach driver's home and started out into the country alone, Detective Dan was ready for any danger that might come his way.

He had accomplished his purpose in getting out of the town without his presence there being known to any of the citizens save to those who have been named.

Young though he was, Dan had had experience enough not to advertise in the papers that he was going on the hunt for Jesse James and his band.

His intention was to go upon a still hunt, to find out, if possible, where the retreat of Jesse James was, and endeavor to track the outlaws to their stronghold.

Rancher Bradley Dean had given him all the information that lay in his power as to how to find the stronghold, but he had added that what he knew was very little, for after being led away from his ranch after capture he had been blindfolded and bound, and long hours had been passed in the saddle before the stronghold had been reached.

He could only guess, from his knowledge of the country in which direction he had been taken, from the wind that was blowing coming directly into his face.

Through that whole night and part of the next day that he was in the saddle the wind had come from the same direction, for it still blew in his face.

This would indicate, from the prevailing direction of the wind in that country, that the outlaws were working down toward the Indian Territory.

It seemed likely that Jesse James' stronghold was situated in the Indian Territory, and Mr. Dean was convinced that such was the fact.

"It will be in that neighborhood that I will get some clew regarding the outlaws," Dan Carrol had said.

"And once I get upon the trail that leads to their stronghold, I will be able to act against them," he added.

With this only as a clew, the boy started upon his trail.

His dress was that of any country youth that he might meet in Kansas, except that his outfit seemed to be a better one. He was more thoroughly armed, and

he felt sure of meeting no one who had his equal in horseflesh.

It was late in the night when Detective Dan Carrol had started upon his trail.

He kept up his pace until the sun rose in the morning.

He had left the country, with which he was most familiar, away behind him when day dawned, and he was in a part of the country that he knew very little about.

A pleasant-looking farmhouse on his left attracted his attention, and he rode up to it for his breakfast.

The farmer greeted him pleasantly and invited him in to take breakfast with himself and wife, asking him at the same time where he had come from.

Detective Dan told him that he had come from the town and was riding about the country to have a look at it, as he knew of several persons who might come there to settle if the soil and surroundings and all were such as suited them.

"I hope others will come in here to settle, for the more that come, the safer will the country be," said the farmer. "You see, there are few settlers to the south of me and to the west, though there are more to the eastward, and this country needs more people in it; the fact is, Jesse James and his outlaws range to the southward from fifty to a hundred miles, and down in the Territory are a great number of lawless men.

"If honest men move in, and there is plenty of land for them, they will drive the lawless element back further into the Territory, so, young feller, I hope you like this country well enough to tell your friends to come here to settle, for the land is first class for cultivating, the range country for cattle is A No. 1, and small towns and villages are not so far away but that we can get to them for provisions when we want them."

Dan Carrol enjoyed his breakfast, thanked the good farmer and wife, for their hospitality, for they would receive no pay, and mounting his horse, after inquiring particularly about the country ahead, once more started upon his trail.

After a ride of a few miles, having spent the night in the saddle, Dan concluded to camp and seek rest.

He turned off of the highway, sought a pleasant spot, staked out his horse, spread his blanket and was soon fast asleep.

It was late in the afternoon when he awoke, and it was the sound of hoofs that aroused him.

A trail led not far from his camp; his horse had gone the length of his long stake-rope, over beyond the hill, and was not visible, while his camp would not also be seen by any one passing along the trail, unless a search for it was made.

As he rested on his elbow and looked up from his blanket, Detective Dan was fairly startled at what he beheld.

There, going along the trail, not a hundred feet away from him was a horseman.

If that horseman was not Jesse James, the bandit king, then it was that outlaw's double.

CHAPTER III.

THE MISER'S MORTGAGE.

Not a score of miles from where Detective Dan Carrol had gone into camp to seek rest, after his night in the saddle, there was located one of the pleasant homes in the State of Kansas.

It was one of those combination farms and ranches so often met with years ago in that State.

The large farmhouse was built of dressed logs, was very comfortable, had a cellar beneath it, and a board piazza upon two sides.

The house was located upon a rise of land, which might almost be called a hill, and it was surrounded by several acres of timber.

It was comfortably furnished, had a large garden plot in the rear, with spacious barns and other out-houses.

It was an ideal country home for a new land, with many cattle roving over the plains on one side and well cultivated fields upon the other.

The crops were ready for harvest, and all about the place seemed to be prosperity and comfort.

The owner bore the name of Alfred Oswald, and with his wife, his aged mother and father, who lived

with him, and his three children, two girls and a boy, all were happy in their home.

Mr. Oswald had prospered since his coming to Kansas, and yet, though he did not show it, there was a cloud upon him.

A mortgage hung over his home.

It had been held by the bank in the town that was some distance from where he lived, but this mortgage had been bought by a man lately come into the town and who had offered for it a good bonus.

The mortgage had been sold without the consent of Mr. Oswald, who had been written to, however, of its sale, and who was told the name of the purchaser, and to whom to pay the interest if he could not pay the mortgage, which came due at an early date.

This letter had caused the face of Mr. Oswald to turn very pale, and he had muttered to himself:

"I do not mind the sale of the mortgage, for that is all right; but to be sold into the hands of that man, Carter Carey, my worst foe, means that he has bought it to still dog me through life by his inhuman acts.

"I did not know that Carey was in Kansas.

"I thought that I was well rid of him; but no, he has tracked me here, and I am sure he has done so for a purpose, for he is unforgiving and revengeful.

"I cannot pay the mortgage, and I have not cattle enough and other stock with my farm to raise money to pay it.

"That mortgage covers nearly all that I own, and if I could get it renewed for a couple of more years I could pay it, and would have my farm and all other property free.

"What am I to do?

"I have no friends out here who would help me, and if that man, Carter Carey, presses me for the money, he will ruin me.

"In two days the mortgage is due, and I must go to the town on that day and see what arrangements I can make about it, but I feel that he has come here for a purpose and that purpose is to ruin me, and holding as he does, that debt over me, he has the power to do so.

"I will start early on the morning that it is due

and reach the town before noon, paying upon it the few hundreds of dollars that I have been able to save up."

Alfred Oswald did not intend to tell his wife of his troubles, but she read in his face that something was wrong, and questioning him upon the subject, heard the story.

"Carter Carey has come here to ruin us and he will do so, I am sure," said the woman, her face paling at the thought.

"To-morrow will be Sunday, but early Monday morning you must start for the town and see if there is no way in which you can get time on this mortgage," she said.

All that day Alfred Oswald went about his home like one in a dream.

He seemed to feel that the hand of doom was upon him.

He had been ruined in the past by that very man whom he now feared, Carter Carey.

He had sought another home in Kansas, and again begun his life anew.

Now when happiness seemed within his grasp, doom again fell upon him.

His old foe was at hand, had come to the town near where he lived, and he felt sure that his purpose was still to dog his life.

Alfred Oswald had been, in earlier life, a fast man, and years before, over a game of cards, he had been forced to fire, in self-defense, upon one with whom he was playing a game for every dollar he possessed in the world.

His shot had been an instant before that of his foe, who, in firing at him also, had badly wounded him.

When he arose from his long bed of suffering, Alfred Oswald had discovered the whole truth that had come upon him.

His foe, Carter Carey, had been killed; he was under arrest for taking his life, and he was compelled to go to jail and await his trial.

That trial had bankrupted his old father and mother to clear him of the crime of murder, and, then it was that the man's life was changed completely.

He had gone to another town, entered into business and become successful, but there he had been followed by the father of the man he had killed, Carter Carey, and in a couple of years his life had been blasted once more by the revengeful man who was dogging his steps.

Once more he had fled to a spot where he deemed that he could live down the past.

He had done so, and was again successful in his Kansas home.

Then it was that he discovered that the mortgage upon his property, which had been in the hands of the bank, had been purchased by no less a person than Carter Carey, who had dogged his steps to his distant home.

That the mortgage had been bought by Carter Carey to again ruin him, there was no doubt in his mind.

And on the morrow that mortgage, held by his bitter foe, was coming due.

That Sunday night neither Alfred Oswald nor his wife could sleep, so great was their worry, and, at last, when daylight came he had risen and prepared for his ride into town.

"Do not have trouble with the old man, Alfred," his wife had said, "but try to get the bank to take back the mortgage and hold it for you; that is about all that you can do."

"There comes a horseman up to our home now," said Alfred Oswald.

"Yes, I see him, some of the neighbors I suppose."

"My dear, it is that old revengeful miser, Carter Carey, and he has come here to collect that mortgage.

"You see how he is dogging my steps. Nothing else could have brought that man here to my home," and the face of Alfred Oswald became very dark.

"My husband, promise me that you will do nothing to provoke him to anger. The mortgage must be paid in some way, but do not let him force you to turn against him. He has dared to come here and he has a purpose in it, a purpose to drive you to the wall."

"Yes, he has come to the home of the man who killed his son," said Alfred Oswald, "but I will do nothing to harm him. I will appeal to his humanity

if he has any, to give me time on that mortgage, but is it not strange that he has come here?"

The husband and wife stood watching the horseman as he approached.

He rode up to the house, hitched his horse, and dismounted.

As he approached the house, Alfred Oswald stepped forward to meet him, and called out:

"I recognized you, Mr. Carey, and, though surprised that you should come to my home, I at least bid you welcome, for I am sure that it is no mistake in your having done so."

"No, there is no mistake," said the visitor, quietly, and there was by no means a pleasant look upon his face.

He was a man with a dark, cruel face, wore a long beard, and his eyes were very bright and piercing; but there was a cunning leer in them, and an expression altogether that showed that he was in an ugly humor.

"I came on purpose, Alfred Oswald, for there is little matter between us that must be settled."

"You refer to the mortgage that you hold upon my property?" said Mr. Oswald, quietly.

"Yes, but I did not know that you were aware it was in my hands."

"Yes, I was notified of the fact; but will you come in and have breakfast, for we were about to sit down, and I do not wish to forget my hospitality even to one whom I do not like and who does not like me."

"For reasons, my dear Oswald, for reasons," was the sneering answer.

"We will not refer to those reasons, as you are beneath my roof."

"You are welcome to breakfast if you will have it."

"I will certainly have it, for I stopped all night at a farmhouse several miles from here, but did not have breakfast this morning before I left, being anxious to come to you."

"Well, after breakfast we will see what we can do in regard to the mortgage you hold."

"We will, we will, and let me tell you that I paid

the bank a good price for that mortgage, for I wanted it."

"And you have it, and it is due to-day," said Farmer Oswald.

"Yes, due to-day," was the answer of the visitor, while a sinister smile crossed his face.

CHAPTER IV.

A STRANGER CHIPS IN.

Farmer Oswald controlled himself wonderfully well, for he felt that he was compelled to do so, even in the presence of his worst enemy, for the sake of those who loved him he would show no temper which might destroy his last hope of a successful deal with the man.

He knew Carter Carey as a miser; he had a reputation of grinding all with whom he had done business in the past.

He was known to hoard his money, to lend only on big interest, and to force those who owed him to pay up upon the day it was due.

Where he had lived he had been known as old Skin-
c
nt, and one and all regarded him as a miser, merci-
to those who owed him money.

As the man laid aside his hat and gloves, just as Mrs. Oswald entered the room.

She had risen early to have breakfast with her husband, who had expected to go to the town.

The others of the family were not yet up, so that they were alone.

"Wife, this is Mr. Carter Carey, whom you have met before," said Farmer Oswald.

Mrs. Oswald bowed and said quickly:

"You will have breakfast with us, of course."

"I will, Mrs. Oswald, I will," said the man, who had a way of repeating his words to make them more forceful.

He sat down to the table and was helped bounteously.

Farmer Oswald spoke of the weather, the crops, and a few other things merely to break the painful silence that seemed to threaten.

The miser who held the mortgage replied in his

sneering way, and turned the subject upon the value of the farm land, the stock, and all else belonging to the place.

"You have a fine place here, Mr. Oswald, but from what you say I consider that you got a very liberal mortgage on it."

"It is well worth more than the mortgage you hold," was the answer.

"I hope so, for I wish to lose nothing on my venture, in case you cannot pay the sum due to-day."

The miser reminded Mrs. Oswald of a purring cat, and she excused herself from the table, hardly having touched her breakfast.

"Will you come out upon the piazza or go into the sitting-room," asked the farmer.

The miser seemed to have enjoyed his breakfast immensely.

As for the farmer he had hardly touched the meal, for he seemed to feel a dread of what was before him.

"Well, Oswald," began the miser, after he had taken a seat within the sitting-room, "you know why I am here?"

"Yes, about that mortgage which is due to-day."

"It is for five thousand dollars and one year's interest at eight per cent., making five thousand four hundred dollars."

"Yes, that is the sum."

"I do not consider your property worth any more, if it will bring that."

"I am ready to pay you the interest," said the farmer.

"Yes, the interest and the principal."

"The principal I cannot pay; the interest I will pay, and now."

"Did you expect to make this arrangement with the bank?"

"I certainly did, for the bank considered it a gilt-edge mortgage."

"I do not."

"We differ in that," remarked the farmer.

"I want five thousand four hundred dollars, and now. I paid more than that for it, and I want it to

hold your mortgage, for reasons," said the miser with something of a sneer.

"Yes, for the reasons that you killed my son, and I am revengeful, but if you can pay this mortgage now, and the interest, we will not discuss that latter sad affair."

"I can pay the interest only; but if I had time I might get the bank to buy it back from you, and I was going to town for that purpose when you came."

"You are the only man that can buy this mortgage upon its face value and the interest due. The bank or any one else could have it for treble the amount it calls for," was the stern answer.

"Man, have you no mercy. I can pay that mortgage within a year or two years at furthest if you will give me the time."

"You shall not have one moment after the sun sets to-night to redeem it. If you do not pay it, in fact within banking hours, I shall sell you out or take possession immediately myself."

"And turn my family and myself out in the cold?"

"Yes."

"Then you are merciless?"

"I am."

"Will you return to the town with me and see what I can do to raise the money?"

"No, give me a check here."

"I have not that money in bank. I have with me some five hundred dollars in cash in the house. That is all."

"Then out you and your gang go, and at once."

There was a dangerous look in the eyes of the farmer, and with difficulty he seemed able to control the emotions that almost overwhelmed him.

He could have struck that man dead without mercy, as the blow was not against him alone, but against those he loved.

The miser seemed to read that look, for his hands went together under the table at which he sat.

There was one within another room that seemed also to dread trouble, for she heard all.

Mrs. Oswald came quietly into the room just as her husband had made up his mind to act.

To him it was a case of self-defense.

This man had come to his home to hound him; he had come there for the sole purpose of ruining him, to avenge his son, slain by Oswald's hand, though slain in self-defense.

The man was wholly merciless.

They were together and alone.

Must he again stain his hands with blood by taking the life of a man who regarded him as a bitter foe?

Was it not another case of self-defense?

Mr. Oswald was not armed, but his rifle and weapons hung on the wall near by.

If Carter Carey would show no mercy to him, then he would be driven to show no mercy to Carter Carey.

Such was the feeling that possessed him as Mrs. Oswald came into the room.

"Mr. Carey," she said, very quietly, but with a pleading in her tones, "I have overheard what you have said. Are you so utterly remorseless as to drive us from our home, not only my husband and myself, but his aged mother and father and our children? That mortgage is not for half the sum that this farm land and stock would bring at a public sale. My husband is making money, and, when his crops are in this year he will be able to lay aside a large sum toward paying mortgage next year.

"In two years we can hope to pay it; now you can have the interest due.

"Does your hatred demand that you sell us out, for we have nowhere to go and will have nothing to begin life on again.

"We are getting old, and it will be hard indeed to make another struggle for those he loves."

The appeal of Mrs. Oswald might have turned a heart of stone, but the sinister smile of Carter Carey did not change.

He was untouched, and he said very decidedly:

"You have heard my terms. I want five thousand four hundred dollars, not in checks and bad paper, but in cash, or out you go this day. Pay or get out."

Mrs. Oswald turned to her husband; she appealed to him now, for she saw the look in his face that meant

THE JESSE JAMES STORIES.

that he would act and against the miser who would ruin them.

But there was a step heard just then upon the piazza, a moment more and a tall form appeared in the doorway.

It was a striking form of a handsome man, broad shouldered and a little flashily dressed, perhaps, with his velvet coat, and pantaloons stuck in his top boots and a broad sombrero and silk shirt.

Yet he was a man with calm face, strangely stern, and eyes that burned like fire.

All three in the room looked upon the intruder with surprise.

Miser Carey supposed that he was some farmer that had arrived unnoticed, and had appeared upon the scene.

That he had overheard what had been said there was no doubt of.

Their words had been spoken in a loud tone, and in the doorway leading into the room stood an aged couple, a man and woman with gray hair, and three children.

They had been aroused by the voices below, dressed hastily, and come downstairs to know the cause.

They were the parents and children of Farmer Oswald and his wife.

They had come to the door a moment before the step was heard upon the piazza and the entrance of the strange visitor.

Who the stranger was, Alfred Oswald did not know, nor did his wife.

They had never seen the man before.

There was no doubt that he had overheard what had been said between them if he had been outside near the house.

Mr. Oswald rose as though to greet the stranger: but Carter Carey said, with savage earnestness:

"If you have no business here, don't intrude. This is a matter to be settled between this man and myself, and right now."

"But I have business here, and that is why I chip in as I do," was the cool answer of the stranger.

"Then don't take our time to attend to your business; not now, for I have the call," said Carey.

"Now is the time that I take and I call you, for I hold trumps in this little game of deviltry that you are trying to play," was the very calm, yet stern response of the visitor.

CHAPTER V.

THE UNKNOWN FRIEND.

The situation in the sitting-room of Alfred Oswald was a dramatic one.

Crowded within the door leading to another room were his old parents and his children; near the table stood Mrs. Oswald.

Beside her was her husband.

Miser Carter Carey sat at the table, his hands beneath it, but with the air of a man who felt that he was playing a winning game and there was no chance of his losing.

The stern words of the stranger not only startled him, but also all the others present.

At the words of the visitor the face of Carter Carey assumed a look of surprise, and a malignant flash came into his eyes.

"How dare you thus address me, sir," he said, in a tone meant to make the visitor quail.

A quiet laugh came from the lips of the unknown man. He did not seem in the least impressed by the manner of the miser. His hands rested within the pocket of his velvet coat.

He certainly was a splendid-looking specimen of manhood and appeared to be the very one to help the unfortunate out in time of trouble.

Carter Carey did not like that laugh; it seemed too confident of power felt in himself.

"I am here," said the miser, very decidedly, "to get my money upon a mortgage of five thousand dollars, with interest, due to-day, of four hundred dollars, and if I don't get full payment, these people must get out."

Again the stranger laughed lightly.

"What are you laughing at?" demanded the miser.

"At you."

"And why at me?"

"You are such a fool."

"What do you——"

"Hold on; don't get excited. Don't prove yourself more of a fool than I think you."

There was something in the words, and the look of the man that caused the miser to take his seat, from which he had risen in a threatening way.

Turning to the farmer, the stranger asked:

"Can you not pay the interest, sir, on the mortgage that he holds, and renew for another year or two?"

"Yes, I can pay the interest and offered it to him, but he refused."

"Why refuse when the mortgage is perfectly good."

"I demand that it shall be paid," said the miser.

"Yes, but you can change your demand for mercy's sake."

"No, I have no mercy where this man is concerned. He and his family must pay or get out."

"It seems, then, that some secret hatred governs you in this matter."

"A secret hatred does govern me, and I will not yield."

"You may be persuaded to change your mind," said the stranger.

"Never."

"Men with stronger minds than yours have changed them," was the smiling response.

"Now, see here, what the devil do you mean by coming here and interfering where you have no business."

"But I have business here."

"What is your business?"

"To act for humanity's sake."

"Humanity, there is no such thing," said the miser with a growl.

"But the world would hardly believe that I would err on the side of humanity it is true, but in this case it is true, as I have in others, but no one would give me the credit for it."

"You have nothing to do with this case."

"Yes, I have."

"I will not allow it."

"It takes two to make a bargain," said the stranger.

"Yes, this man Oswald and myself; if he does not pay me out he goes."

The stranger turned slightly toward the farmer and said:

"Mr. Oswald you do not know me, but will you trust me to buy your mortgage."

There was something in the face that gave Farmer Oswald a ray of hope, and he said, very decidedly:

"I will."

"Then I will pay the face value of that mortgage and the interest due to-day."

"You will do nothing of the kind," shrieked the miser.

"Oh, yes, I will."

"You will not, for I will not sell the mortgage."

"Do you mean it?"

"I do."

"You refuse to sell that mortgage?"

"I certainly do."

"I will give you a bonus for it."

"I will not take it, for I paid one thousand more for that mortgage than the face value called for."

"Ah, you appear to be a good hater."

"I am."

"Farmer Oswald, why does this man hate you why have you wronged him?"

"I meant not to wrong him, but years ago, acting in self-defense over a game of cards, I killed this man's son."

"Not content with ruining me, and causing me to spend my fortune to save myself from the gallows, he has dogged me ever since."

"I believed that in coming out here I had escaped from his hatred, but he bided his time and came here also, and, finding that I was prosperous once more, he bought up the mortgage from the bank, and now comes to me when I cannot pay it, and threatens to turn me out of my home."

"It is a hard case, indeed," said the stranger, "and shows a very vindictive spirit," and then turning to the miser, he said:

"My man, I will pay you the six thousand dollars

you paid for this mortgage and the interest and take it off your hands."

"I will not sell," said the miser.

"I will give you seven thousand for it."

"I will not sell," almost shrieked Carter Carey.

"Very well, you have lost your chance for making money, and that seems to be your god."

"How have I lost my chance?" asked Carter Carey.

"Well, Mr. Oswald will pay you the face value of the mortgage and the interest."

"He cannot do so, he has not time, and he cannot raise the money."

"Oh, yes, he can," was the reply.

"I take no checks from you if that is what you mean."

"I will not give you checks."

"Then the mortgage cannot be paid."

"Oh, yes, it can."

"How can it?" and somehow Carter Carey seemed to be growing very uneasy at the turn affairs had taken.

"Mr. Oswald," and the unknown turned toward the farmer.

"Yes, sir."

As this man has refused far more than he gave the mortgage and thus missed a chance of selling it at a large profit, I happen to have with me money enough to loan you the sum demanded."

Alfred Oswald turned pale at the words of the stranger.

Could it be that one unknown to him would help him out in his time of need?

Could it be that a man riding alone through the country, as he seemed to be, have such a sum on his person.

Carter Carey seemed also struck dumb by the words. At first he did not answer what the stranger said.

The old people, Mrs. Oswald and the children, stood in silent amazement.

All eyes were upon the unknown.

"My God, can you mean this?" asked the farmer.

"I do."

With this he thrust his hand in his pocket, drew out

a large leather wallet that seemed to be fat with bank notes as he opened it.

He placed it on the table before the farmer and said, calmly:

"Mr. Oswald count out from that wallet five thousand four hundred dollars due to this man, for I must keep an eye on him, as he looks as though he were going crazy."

The farmer sunk down in his chair again and seemed overcome with his feelings.

Mrs. Oswald uttered a slight cry, and the children laughed in glee.

For a moment it did seem as though Miser Carter Carey was going crazy.

His face turned the hue of a corpse, and he glared at the unknown, while gradually there swept over his countenance a look that was malignant in ugliness and very threatening.

Perhaps it was his desire of gain that got the better of him, for seeing that the farmer had the money before him, as a glare at the pocketbook showed, and that he could pay the sum demanded in full, he cried, suddenly:

"I will sell you that mortgage for the seven thousand; I have changed my mind."

"You will do nothing of the kind," was the deliberate answer of the unknown friend.

"Then I will not take your money, for I know that it is counterfeit," and the miser hedged on the last charge that he made against the stranger.

CHAPTER VI.

AN OUTLAW'S AID.

At the direct charge of Miser Carter Carey against the stranger that he refused to take his money because it was counterfeit, Farmer Oswald started.

Perhaps the stranger did not really have good money, but with a lot of counterfeit bills had attempted a great bluff to try and save the farm to him and to those he loved.

The stranger did not seem to flinch under the direct charge of Carter Carey.

He smiled serenely.

"Come, don't be a fool, my man, when you are beaten at every turn of the cards. You played your game to win against Farmer Oswald, and did so.

"I played my game to win against you, and I held my rumps.

"Farmer Oswald, count out the money demanded by this skinflint and malignant man, and pay him.

"That money is as good as gold.

"If he questions it he has me to deal with, and those who know me well call me a dangerous man when aroused.

"I happened upon your place by accident; I never met you before in my life.

"I am a stranger passing through your country hunting up speculations, and I have the money to pay my way.

"I came to this place to ask for breakfast, and overheard what was going on.

"I discovered that devil in human shape was playing a deep game to ruin an honest man. I came in and tipped in. This fellow must accept the situation, for he will stand no trifling."

The words were spoken decidedly, and the speaker showed that he was very much in earnest.

There was the money on the table before Mr. Oswald.

The miser grew very dark in the face; he had changed to a very ugly humor.

He watched the farmer as he opened the wallet and counted out in bills, crisp and new as though fresh from the bank, five thousand dollars in denomination of centies, fifties and one hundreds.

"I thank you, but I have the money to pay the interest," said Mr. Oswald.

"No, let the debt remain the same as it was with this man," was the answer.

There was much more left in the wallet, as both Mr. Oswald and the miser saw.

This the farmer closed and returned to the unknown, who slipped it into his pocket.

Then Farmer Oswald handed the money across to Carter Carey with the remark:

"Thanks to the noble generosity of this stranger, I can pay you. Count that money."

Carter Carey glanced at the money, then at the stranger, and his hands moved as though to appear from under the table.

Quick as a flash he was covered by a revolver in the hands of the unknown.

"Move an inch and you are a dead man," he called out, and his hand was like iron, his aim dead sure, the muzzle of his gun pointing between the eyes of the miser.

The miser did not move, his face became pallid, he felt that he was caught.

"Mrs. Oswald, this man may thank you that your presence in this room and those people yonder saved him from instant death. Kindly take the weapon out of his hand."

Oswald looked surprised, but stepped around very quickly to the side of the miser.

His hands were on his lap under the table, and in his right he grasped a large revolver.

He dared not move, for something in the face of the stranger showed him that it would be death to do so.

Mrs. Oswald took the revolver and started to hand it to the stranger.

It was cocked and ready to use.

"Put it on the table there before your husband," he said.

The woman obeyed.

"So you had your gun ready," said the stranger.

"I had to protect my life in the presence of the man who shot down my poor son in cold blood," was the answer of the miser.

"I am sure that you lie, for that man is not one to commit such an act."

"I thank you," said Alfred Oswald.

"Stand up, sir," and this was addressed to the miser.

Carter Carey obeyed, but he was trembling from head to foot.

"Count that money on the table, put it in your pocket, and leave this house."

The man obeyed in terror; but, frightened as he

was, he saw that there was not any mistake in the money counted out to him.

He felt, too, that the bills were genuine, there could be no doubt of that.

"Hand out that mortgage."

With a groan the man did so.

"You have your money; now Mr. Oswald see if that mortgage is right.

"See, also, if the other interests you have paid since you got it are credited upon it."

"Yes, the credits are here, and all is right."

"Hand it to your wife, please."

"Now Mr. Carey march out of this house," and the stranger picked up the miser's revolver.

"I will even up this matter with you some time," fairly hissed the miser.

"Any time that it suits you, unless you forget I will hunt you up some day and remind you of your threat against me," was the cool reply.

The miser walked out of the house without a word.

Something in the words of the stranger seemed to impress him that they would meet again.

He walked down the street, the stranger close behind him.

There he saw the horse of the unknown hitched to the piazza railing.

His own animal was out in the rack.

He mounted in silence and the stranger called out to him:

"I have thrown the cartridges out of your pistol and here it is. Go, and don't forget that we will meet again."

The miser rode away heartsick and weary.

He showed his temper by driving the spurs into his horse and dashing off like mad.

As he disappeared from out of the gate leading into the ranch, which he left open, the stranger turned and said:

"Mr. Oswald, you are free of him, but, beware of him, for the desire of revenge on you is very bitter.

"Do not allow him to get the slightest hold upon you.

"Now may I have breakfast?"

"Indeed, you may, and become our guest as long as you care to remain.

"You have saved us and our home, prevented us from becoming wanderers as it were.

"We thank you from our inmost hearts," and the woman grasped him by both hands.

He turned slightly, as though to conceal the emotions that almost overcame him, while at the same time Oswald's little girl, Ellen, said sweetly:

"Please kiss me, sir."

The stranger started as though she had struck him a blow, his lips quivered, he put back the outstretched hand, and said:

"No, no, no, I am not good enough to kiss you. Now let us have breakfast."

"I do not know your name, sir, but I would like to, for I would like to know who does me this favor," said Farmer Oswald, and tears stood in his eyes.

"My name is James," was the answer.

Breakfast was soon served, and all sat down to it, the stranger keeping very quiet.

His horse had been put away and fed.

Soon after breakfast the stranger, lighting a cigar and offering one to Farmer Oswald and his father, said:

"I must go on my way.

"Some day, Mr. Oswald, I will come for my money on that mortgage, but I will treat you better than did that skinflint. Good-by."

Without another word or grasp even of the hand, for he did not seem to see that the farmer's hand was outstretched toward him, he leaped into the saddle with the ease of a perfect athlete, and rode away at a gallop.

"Papa, do you know who he reminds me of," asked Edward, the twelve-year-old boy of the farmer.

"He reminds me of some one I have seen before. But I cannot recall," was the answer.

"I will show you," and Edward, who had just come downstairs with an illustrated paper in his hands, said:

"That is the man he reminds me of, especially when he is on horseback."

The boy pointed to a full-page illustration of a horseman, and it was a most striking picture.

"Why, my son, that is the picture of Jesse James, the bandit king," said the farmer.

"Yes, and the stranger said his name was James, and he was the image of Jesse James."

"By heaven, the boy is right," exclaimed Mrs. Oswald.

"My dear, if that man was not Jesse James, it was his double," excitedly said Alfred Oswald.

"Then Jesse James is not the fiend that they call him. He is a man with a noble heart, outlaw though he be," returned Mrs. Oswald.

All looked at the picture and then at the horseman riding away in the distance.

They saw him close the gate behind him, raise his hat politely, and gallop on down the highway.

"Papa, that man is Jesse James, I am sure," said Eddie Oswald.

"I almost believe you are right, my boy, and, if so, we have been befriended by an outlaw," was Farmer Oswald's response, and his face wore a very troubled look.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE RIGHT TRACK.

When Dan Carrol, the boy detective, discovered the horseman ride by his camp, as he did, he felt sure that it could be none other than Jesse James, the bandit king.

The man was either Jesse James himself, or he was the one who had shot down Dan's boyhood friend, Scott Durham, and killed Farmer Carrol.

If so, he was also the man who had twice held up Bill Dudley's stage-coach on its way from the town to the railroad station, where Dan had taken the train with his sister to Chicago.

The youth had studied the face of Jesse James from several hundred illustrations he had seen of him in the papers in Chicago.

He had studied the man on foot and on horseback

in one picture and another until his face was engraved upon his heart and brain.

There was no doubting that remarkable face of the outlaw.

Once seen it could be recalled at a glance if it had not been disguised.

In this case, Dan Carrol, the young detective, was sure that no disguise had been attempted.

The man had boldly attempted to go through that part of the county without the slightest disguise.

He knew that the outlaw was a man who took great chances where the odds were ninety-nine and a hundred against him. He was aware that Jesse James seemed to be glad to risk them.

It was said that Jesse James bore a charmed life.

He seemed to escape from every difficulty as though he really did so.

That the outlaw chief really did believe that he bore a charmed life seemed to be assured.

The horseman had passed on out of sight, while Dan Carrol lay upon his blanket as though dazed by his appearance.

When the man was gone, Dan gave a low whistle, then he sprang to his feet, folded up his blanket, gathered up his weapons and other traps, and started after his horse.

He had staked the animal out upon the edge of the hill, the horse had wandered down it in search of better grass, and hence had not been seen by the outlaw horseman as he passed.

When Dan got the stake-rope he discovered that the animal had pulled it up and strayed on through the woods.

Dan was startled by the discovery; he did not see his horse and did not know how far he had gone.

The animal might have pulled up the stake-rope soon after the youth had gone to sleep and thereby have gone quite a distance away.

He at once returned to his traps and hid them in the bushes, then he started off on the trail of the stray animal.

It was all of a mile that he walked, following the trail, before he came in sight of the horse.

Black Bess saw him coming, pricked up her ears, but did not run from him.

The animal was too affectionate and well trained to do that.

She had come to learn that the youth who treated her so kindly was her master.

"You served me a shabby trick, Black Bess, and may prevent me from capturing Jesse James, but I will not scold you for the stake was not driven down very deep," said the youth.

He took up the stake-rope, sprang upon her bare back, and started upon his return to the camp.

Quickly he saddled and bridled the horse, fastened on his traps, mounted and set off on the trail of the horseman whom he had decided beyond all doubt was Jesse James.

He discovered where the track of the horseman turned into the highway and which way it went.

The trail did not lead back toward the town, but in the other direction.

"He is going back to his retreat, I judge. Oh, if I can only get ahead of him," said Dan, and with this he went on rapidly, but the tracks showed that the horse was also going along at a rapid trot.

Coming to a farmhouse just off the highway, the youth turned off and questioned a man who was in the yard.

Yes, he had seen a man go by all of an hour before, for he had stopped there for a drink of water.

He described the man, and Dan said:

"Yes, that is the man; did he say where he was going?"

"No, just looking around the county."

With this information the youth went on.

Coming to another farmhouse, he learned that the man had passed, but had not halted.

Dan watered his horse, got a lunch from the good woman at the farm and once more started on his way.

Later in the day Dan saw a horsemen coming toward him.

As he drew nearer he discovered that he was a person whom he had quite frequently seen in the town.

He knew him there only as an old miser and skin-

flint money lender, who had come to the town only a year before.

Though over fifty years of age, the miser did not look it, and rode along as though he was much younger.

As Dan Carrol drew nearer, the miser came to a halt.

"Boy, I've seen you before, and I want to know if you get about this country a great deal?" Carter Carey asked.

"Yes, sir; when my father was alive I used to go to the town every week or two, and I've gone about the country considerable in my hunt for stray cattle from our farm," was the answer.

"Who was your father?"

"Farmer Carrol."

"Ah, yes, he was killed by Jesse James a couple of months ago, I believe?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, in going about the county, have you ever met a good-looking fellow, I may say tall, who dressed in a velvet coat, corduroy pants and a big slouch hat?"

"I believe I have met such a man," said Dan, very much struck at the description of the one whose trail he was then upon, but the boy did not give the fact away that the miser had described Jesse James.

"Well, who is he and what is he?"

"I am not sure of his name, but if it is the one I think it is, he's on the hunt for money."

"Got whiskers on his chin and a mustache?"

"Yes, sir, I guess it is the man I speak of."

"Does he come to the town often?"

"Well, I've seen him in the town, if it is the one I think it is," said Dan, guardedly.

"Where does he live?"

"Down toward the Territory, I believe," and Dan added:

"Have you seen him?"

"Yes, I have seen him."

"Have you had trouble with him?"

"No, but I may have some day."

"What has he done?" asked Dan, innocently.

"Well, I went to Farmer Oswald's farm, a few miles back, to collect a mortgage due to-day. The

farmer couldn't pay what was due, and I was going to turn him out."

"That was a dirty, mean act," said Dan, boldly.

"A man is entitled to his own, and I was going to have mine, while I don't want to hear you say I was going to do a dirty, mean act."

"I don't care what you want to hear. If you were going to turn that good man out of his house and home and not renew his mortgage upon his payment of interest, which I suppose he could do, it was a mean act," said the youth, fearlessly.

"Boy, if you wish to keep out of trouble, you had better not talk that way to me."

"Oh, I've said my say, and it is just what I think of you. You cannot scare me by any show of bluff; but did you turn those good people out?"

Seeming to forget his anger with the boy at the mention of his treatment of Farmer Oswald, the old miser said:

"No, but I would have done so, had not the man I described to you came to the house and paid the amount of the mortgage, and thus prevented me from getting my dues from Farmer Oswald or forcing him to the wall."

"This man paid the money, you say?"

"Yes."

"The man you spoke of with the velvet coat and slouch hat?"

"Yes."

"Do you mean that he was a friend of Farmer Oswald?"

"He pretended not to be, but he certainly was to pay that money, for he handed it over to him with a word."

"When was this?"

"This morning after breakfast."

"Have you just come from Farmer Oswald's?"

"No, I had business at another farm, and I went there. Now I am on my way back to the town."

"Where is this man who paid the mortgage?"

"Oh, I left him at the Oswald ranch."

"Well, I must be going," said Dan, hurriedly.

"Hold on, boy, if you can find out who that fellow

is, bring me word to my office in town, and I will give you five dollars."

"Keep your five dollars," said Dan, "I want to find out just who the man is myself," and the young detective started off again on the track of the man whom he believed beyond all doubt was Jesse James.

Of one thing he was certain, if it was Jesse James, the man who had passed his camp, then he must have left the Oswald ranch soon after the miser did, taking to the highway and thus passing him as he did a couple of hours or so afterward.

Dan was on the right track, he felt sure, because it seemed to him that the track of the horseman led back toward the Oswald ranch again.

It might be that, having done the farmer such a favor as the miser had stated, he had returned there for the night.

Dan made up his mind to go on there at once, face the man, if there, whom he suspected of being Jesse James, and have it out with him, be the result what it might.

CHAPTER VIII.

BEYOND ALL DOUBT.

It was nearing sunset when Detective Dan Carroll drew in sight of the Oswald ranch.

He knew the place, as he did many others in the county; in fact, he was thoroughly posted with the entire geography of that part of the country.

He had met Farmer Oswald in the town once or twice, as he also had met Miser Carter Carey and others whom he knew very slightly.

The boy had a reputation in the county, and was known to a great many people with whom he came in contact.

Farmer Oswald saw him coming into the gate, and came out on the piazza to meet him.

After the departure of the man who had so befriended himself and his family, all of them sat together and talked it over, wondering if it could be possible that their kind benefactor was really Jesse James, whom Eddie Oswald claimed that it was.

"What can be his purpose in befriending me?" Mr. Oswald asked, but neither his parents nor his wife could answer his question.

The farmer felt greatly troubled over the fact that though he had saved his place from the cruel hands of Carter Carey, the miser, the mortgage was still in the possession of Jesse James.

He knew that it had not been recorded again and that the outlaw, if outlaw he was, had merely written upon the same document fresh dates and an new transfer of the paper to himself.

What troubled Mr. Oswald most was the fact that he had been befriended by one whom, if really the bandit king, was looked upon as a merciless man to all others.

These thoughts were in the farmer's mind as he walked up and down the sitting-room and caught sight of the young detective entering his gate, leading out into the highway.

When Dan rode up to the horse-rack and dismounted, Mr. Oswald greeted him pleasantly, and said:

"I believe you are Farmer Carroll's son, who had that affair with Jesse James some time since."

"Yes, Mr. Oswald," was the answer, "and may I ask if you have any visitor at your place now?"

"No, I have not; but two men have been here to-day."

"Who were they?" asked Dan.

"The name of one was Carter Carey, a new resident in the town, and, I believe, a money lender; the other bore the name, he told me, of James."

"I met Mr. Carey on the road here, and I am now looking for your other visitor, who, I believe, was none other than Jesse James."

"I am of that same opinion, because my little boy recognized him from pictures he had kept in the papers; but can it be possible that a man who was so kind to me was really that outlaw chief?"

"He was kind to you, then?" asked Dan, with some surprise.

"Yes, most kind."

"That is not the reputation he bears."

"I have heard so many things said for and against

Jesse James, if he was my visitor, that I hardly know what to believe."

"Well, I have met him, and under very deadly circumstances," Dan said, very decidedly, "and I hoped to find him here."

"You knew, then, that he had been here?"

"Yes, he passed my camp this morning, and I followed him here."

"Do you know him to be Jesse James?"

"I know him to be either Jesse James or his double."

"Indeed, I wish you would tell me what you know about him."

"I know merely that he is an outlaw and has been a lawless raider of this county and other parts of Kansas and Missouri for some years."

"You doubtless know that he killed my father and also shot a friend of mine who was with me coming from the town one night some months ago, and also robbed both him and myself."

"Yes, I have heard of those acts."

"I sought to find him to-day when I first saw that he had visited your place."

"Well, I would have believed that he was not Jesse James who visited me here, but there seems to be no doubt of it."

"No doubt whatever, either he or his double."

"But come, my friend, and spend the night with us."

Dan looked about him and saw that night was coming on.

Farms were not very frequent in that part of the country, and he knew that it would be impossible to track Jesse James any further until the following day.

He, therefore, decided to accept the invitation of the farmer and remain all night.

By doing so he could learn much more of the man whose trail he was following.

Dan wished to make no mistake in the matter.

He was morally certain that the man he was following was Jesse James, but he might not be.

He asked Mr. Oswald which way the outlaw had gone when he left his home.

The farmer explained to him as he sat on the piazza all that had occurred.

Dan was utterly astonished.

He did not know whether to condemn the merciless act of Miser Carter Carey or admire the strange deed of Jesse James, if Jesse James it had been who had befriended the farmer.

"And you never saw him before?" asked the youth.

"No, I never did."

"He was not known to you, then, as a friend of your early life?"

"No, for I came out to Kansas penniless and without friends."

Mrs. Oswald then came out, and Dan was introduced to her.

She, too, told the story of the merciless act of Carter Carey and of the strange kindness shown by Jesse James, or, at least, by a man calling himself James.

"He simply changed the mortgage by writing in his name and the date anew. Until a new mortgage is recorded, I do not suppose that this one is worth the paper that it is written on."

"Do you know the handwriting of the man?" asked Mr. Oswald, and he brought forth the old mortgage, changed as it had been.

"Yes, for I have studied specimens that I have seen very closely."

"Is that the writing of Jesse James?"

"Yes, I should say that it was."

"It certainly looks like it, and if you will notice he has placed his name here simply as J. J., which would stand very well for Jesse James."

"But you say he paid that miser, Carter Carey, the amount of this mortgage."

"Yes, every dollar of it, with the interest."

"Mr. Oswald, what about the money he paid him with?"

"What do you mean?"

"Was it good money, or was it counterfeit?"

"It was good money, I am sure; there can be no doubt of that."

"He meant no trick in paying the mortgage and the interest."

"None that I can see."

"Under the circumstances, then, Mr. Oswald, there

is no doubt but that the man was Jesse James, and whatever his motive was in paying that mortgage for you, he saved your farm and property to you."

"He certainly did."

"I do not understand it; but to-morrow I will again take his trail, for in spite of his one kind act in this case, the man must be run down," said Dan, very decidedly.

One good look into the face of Farmer Oswald and his wife convinced the young reader of human nature that he was not mistaken, that Mr. Oswald and Mrs. Oswald were certainly not in league with Jesse James, and that the payment by the outlaw of the money due on the mortgage was done from a motive which he could not understand.

After supper the whole family gathered in the sitting-room, and they all talked over again and again the strange happenings of the day, and when Dar Carol, the young detective, retired that night he was more than ever determined to hunt down Jesse James and his outlaw band.

CHAPTER IX.

MISER CAREY'S VISITOR.

While Detective Dan Carol was enjoying the hospitality of the Oswald home, a horseman rode up to a stock-farm quite a distance from the Oswald ranch.

He asked if he could get supper, and also if he could leave his horse and get a fresh animal to carry him into town, and said that he would return in time for breakfast, but that he was on a special mission and must go by night.

He also wanted as fine an animal for a long, hard ride as he could get.

The owner of the ranch was not there, but the cowboy chief in charge readily asked him to supper and ordered the best animal in the stables for the stranger.

The visitor gave him a very liberal fee for his services.

The saddle and bridle of the stranger were transferred to the fresh horse, and after a hearty supper he mounted and rode away upon his mission to the town.

THE JESSE JAMES STORIES.

He asked that his own horse might be well taken care of and groomed and be ready for him when he returned to an early breakfast, as he would then have a long ride before him.

The cowboy promised him that all would be as he requested, and with this the stranger started for the town at a rapid gallop.

The horse he rode was an excellent one indeed, and kept up a rapid canter mile after mile.

After several hours the lights of the town were seen ahead of him.

He slackened his pace and rode in slowly.

He went to the stable of Bill Dudley, the coach driver, and ordered his horse put up and fed and said that he expected it to be ready for him in an hour.

It was a dark night, and threatened to rain, so the stranger turned his coat collar up, half hiding his face from the man who met him at the stable.

Then the stranger walked about the town in a quiet way and muttered to himself:

"This town goes to bed with the chickens, but it is just what I want.

"I would like very much to attend to the double work I have in this town in one night, but I will have to make two rides of it, I am sure.

"I will, however, get all the points so that I can be ready to act in the second undertaking without delay and with as little danger as possible.

"In my second visit I shall also have to arrange two or three relays of horses.

"If I mistake not, I will be hard pressed in making an escape.

"Now to pay a midnight visit to my good friend Carter Carey."

After a walk of half an hour about the town, in which he closely examined a handsome residence and its surroundings, the man turned into a side street where there were no street lamps and where the houses were of a rather humble character.

He seemed to know the town very well, even in the night, and also to know the place to which he wished to go.

Now and then he met a single wayfarer in the street,

but on account of the threatening weather even the watchful constables guarding in the night were not visible.

Stopping at the gate of a one-story, plain dwelling that stood well back in the yard, he started in, but found the gate locked.

With the ease of an athlete he leaped over the fence and moved toward the house.

There were large trees in the yard, and their foliage held the house in dense darkness, but a light gleamed in a small window, before which the curtain was closely lowered.

As he approached the house there was an angry growl, and it was fortunate for him that the dog that sprang toward him was white, for he saw him even in the darkness.

The strange visitor by midnight seemed to have no fear of the dog, large and vicious as the brute appeared to be.

The dog, with his angry growl, certainly made a spring at the throat of the intruder; but his own throat was grasped with an iron grip that almost crushed the bones, and with the other hand the man drew a knife and sunk it deep in the animal.

Thus he held him until the dog was dead, and he dropped him upon the ground.

He certainly knew well how to meet the attack of so fierce an animal, and in the darkness.

Running the knife down into the ground, he cleaned it of its bloodstain and then replaced it in the scabbard in his belt, and moved on toward the house.

The occupant of the house had not been in the least disturbed by the angry growl of the dog, and did not know what was occurring without.

At the stable the visitor, when he left his horse, had made certain inquiries of the stable man regarding the name of the night officer guarding the town.

Knocking at the door, at the same time saying, "Down, down, sir, down!" to the dog, the midnight visitor called out:

"Mr. Carey, I am Constable Catlin. I have a message for you left by a gentleman who came into town to-day."

"All right, officer," came a voice from within.

Then he heard a footfall on the floor of the cottage, the removing of a bar across the door and the turning of several locks.

Miser Carter Carey certainly kept himself well locked up from intruders.

A moment more and the door swung open part way, and Carter Carey said:

"Come in; from the way the wind howls it is not a pleasant night out."

"No, but it suits my purpose. Hands up."

The tall form of the visitor stepped within the cottage. He closed the outer door quickly behind him.

With his words he had thrust a revolver in the face of the miser money lender of the town.

Carter Carey had turned the hue of death.

Over on the table not far from him, where he had been seated, lay a revolver.

It was visible, but a newspaper had been quickly spread over the miser's money, which was also upon the table and which he had been counting when the supposed officer had entered his home.

Not fearing danger from the guardian of peace of the town, he anyhow did not care to let him see what he had been engaged in, and he had spread a paper over his money.

The miser, pallid, trembling, wild-eyed, frightened, knew not what to say.

This midnight visitor certainly was not Officer Cat, the night constable.

He knew that man well, and in the light from the lamp he could see that it was a stranger.

A stranger to the town it might be; but Carter Carey had seen the man before.

He had seen him that very morning.

He had seen him in the home of Farmer Oswald when he had gone there to demand the money on the mortgage he held with threats to ruin him.

He groaned inwardly, but stood with his hands by his side and uttered no word.

"Hold out your hands, sir! You need not raise them, for you are not dangerous, I see," said the visitor.

The miser did not have the power to raise his hands, all pluck having left him.

Turning the key in the door, the midnight visitor, still holding his revolver covering the man, though he could see that he was not dangerous in his terror, clasped one of his hands and slipped a pair of manacles on it. Then the other hand was held up and the handcuffs placed upon that also.

"Sit upon that chair."

The miser hardly moved.

The midnight visitor sat him down with a force that made his teeth chatter.

Then he took a line and bound him to the chair, also securing his feet.

Looking about him, the visitor found a walking cane, and this he used as a gag for the miser's mouth, tying it there.

Carter Carey, in his great terror, made not the slightest resistance.

The thought of losing the money he loved so well made him speechless and devoid of action.

He feared also for his life, and between losing his life and his money he knew not what to do.

Under a table in one corner was a small iron safe.

The door swung open and the key was in the lock.

With the cover on the table the safe was not visible to any one entering the room, but the cover had been removed when the iron box had been opened by the miser to get out his money and count it, his favorite occupation in the evening.

CHAPTER X.

A STRANGE DISAPPEARANCE.

Having firmly secured Miser Carter Carey, the midnight visitor of the money lender very coolly set to work to look about the cottage.

It was a frame building, containing but three rooms and a shed, and Carter Carey was so mean that he lived there without a servant.

He did his own work, and each window and door had as many locks upon them as though the place had been a jail.

There were also guns upon the walls and revolvers at hand for use if the man should be attacked.

But notwithstanding all his locks, notwithstanding the savage dog that he had kept as a guardian without, notwithstanding the fact that the gate was secured by a padlock and chain, Carter Carey had had his stronghold carried without resistance by the stranger.

"I see that you recognize me, Mr. Carey," said the stranger, turning down the collar of his coat and turning up the broad brim of his hat.

"In case you do not, I wish you to know that I met you before, and we had dealings together in the home of Farmer Oswald.

"No replies are necessary owing to that gag in your mouth; but your ears are not stopped up and you can hear.

"I am told, by a spy in this town, that you grind down the poor to whom you lend money at a high interest.

"You never allow a mortgage or a debt to go a day beyond the date that they are due on.

"If you have security you still demand of the poor people a large percentage of interest.

"I am told also that when you get a certain sum saved up you bank it upon the largest interest you can get for it; but in your strong box here you carry all the money needed for your loans.

"You were nicely employed when I entered, and this paper shows what you were doing."

The midnight visitor raised the paper from the table, revealing several buckskin bags of either gold or silver, and stacks of bank bills, and a few other piles of money which the miser had evidently been counting.

Watches, chains and rings were also to be seen in the small box, each one having upon it a ticket with the name of the owner and the amount loaned.

Miser Carter groaned in agony of spirit.

He felt sure that the midnight visitor meant to rob him of every dollar he had in the house.

"That jewelry and those watches I do not wish, for you will have to return those to the unfortunate owners," said the stranger.

"Silver money I do not care to be weighted down with; but your gold and bank bills I want.

"What I do not take I shall make a list of and make it to the magistrate of this town, so that you cannot claim that anything has been taken from you save such as in reality I do take."

With this the midnight visitor took up the bank notes and loose bills and made them into one solid package.

These he thrust into his coat pocket, at the same time taking his pencil and writing down upon a slip of paper the list of things he did not take.

A bag of silver he opened, but did not appropriate.

Two bags of gold found their way into his pocket also.

"I had hoped, Miser Carey, to find that you had more money on hand, but this is not a bad night's work as it will doubtless pan out at least three thousand dollars for me.

"You must have banked your other money very lately.

"I have here the list that I leave so that you cannot cheat those whom you have loaned money to upon articles of value by saying that you have been robbed.

"In case you really do not know me by name, let me inform you that I am known in Kansas and Missouri as Jesse James, the bandit king.

"The members of my band of outlaws are ready to protect me in my retreat, so I advise, when the morning comes, that you do not set the bloodhounds of the law upon my trail.

"Good-night."

With this, the midnight visitor who called himself Jesse James left the cottage, closing the door behind him.

He left the miser tied to his chair and secured gagged with his walking stick, beyond all chance of freeing himself.

Walking leisurely along through the deserted street he went to the stable where he had left his horse.

The man in charge had been paid well to wait up for him.

He had well groomed his horse and fed him, and soon had the animal in readiness.

He again received a fee from the midnight robber as he brought the animal to the door of the stable, and mounting, the horseman went on his way into the darkness and drizzling rain.

He kept his horse at a rapid pace through the night, and just as dawn came he rode up to the ranch where he had left his own horse.

He seemed to feel no fear of pursuit, feeling assured that the old miser would not be found until daylight, even then he would be able to free himself or cause alarm.

He ate a good breakfast.

Mounting his well-rested horse, after a pleasant talk with the cowboy ranchman, he started on his way once more and disappeared in the distant timber.

With the morning Detective Dan Carrol had thanked his hospitable host for his entertainment and departed once more upon the trail of Jesse James.

If the bandit king had slept that night, as he believed, at some farmhouse in the neighborhood, he would have made the discovery and have the full day to find him upon his track.

He saw the trail of the horseman who had been the guest of Alfred Oswald and that he had turned toward town.

Detective Dan Carrol had studied well the tracks of the animal ridden by the supposed outlaw, and with no difficulty he followed the trail.

To his surprise it continued on toward the town.

"Why that man is the most reckless devil I ever met," muttered the youth.

He knows he is well known in this country from newspaper pictures and by the many people he has robbed.

"Can it be possible that he has gone boldly into the town?" and he rode on his way.

Dan had left the Oswald home several hours after sunrise, and as he went on his way he suddenly saw a man riding at full speed of his horse toward him.

Just where he saw the horseman he also beheld a place from which the man was evidently coming.

About the ranch he saw several men mounting their horses in great haste.

"Have you seen any horseman along this road?" shouted the man as he came up near him.

"I have not met any one since I left Farmer Oswald's ranch," answered Dan, and he added:

"Anything wrong?"

"Yes, much is wrong. I am just from the town, and it seems Jesse James was there and robbed that old skinflint, Miser Carter Carey.

"He put his horse up in Bill Dudley's stable, went to the miser's house, drove his knife into that vicious dog that he has, gained admission by pretending to be Officer Catlin, the night watchman, and robbed the man of a great deal of money, how much I do not know."

Detective Dan Carrol was utterly amazed.

The man he was on the search for had been working while he calmly slept.

"Was no alarm given?" he asked, hardly knowing what to say.

"None whatever. After the outlaw left the miser managed to work himself and his chair to the door.

"He was handcuffed, tied to his chair and gagged.

"It was hard work for him, I guess, but at last he got the door open, and by working the walking stick used as a gag, against the wall, he freed his mouth of it and just at daylight began to yell for help.

"Officer Catlin heard him, and, visiting his home, heard the whole story.

"Instantly a man on a fleet horse was mounted and set out on each road leading from the town to warn the people of the country, while also mounted men from the town began to prepare to go in pursuit of the fugitive outlaw.

"I was one of the men sent out to give the alarm, and I have just called at the ranch yonder and they claim that a man that was Jesse James took supper at their house last night, got a fresh horse and said that he had to go to town on business.

"Before sunrise he returned, had breakfast and lit out as coolly as you please without any dread of pursuit.

"Now you have the story."

Daring Dan, as Bill Dudley, the coach driver, called him, could hardly find words to answer, but at last he said:

"Did the ranch people tell you which way he went?"

"Yes, he took this road and disappeared in the woods yonder; but that was some hours ago."

"Where are you going now?"

"I am going on through the country, and will try and have horsemen start in pursuit."

"Are they sure that it was Jesse James that committed the robbery?"

"Yes, Miser Carey recognized him, having seen him that very day at the ranch of Farmer Oswald."

"I will go with you, my man, for Jesse James is the very man I am looking for," said Dan, and, turning around, the two started off together.

There seemed no doubt but that Jesse James had visited the town in the night and robbed Miser Carter Carey and then disappeared as though by magic.

No one had seen him since, and the outlaw had made a very strange disappearance; but Daring Dan was determined to hunt him down to the bitter end.

CHAPTER XI.

DARING DAN IN DISGUISE.

After riding along with the messenger who had given him the startling tidings of the man whom they supposed to be Jesse James and the robbery of Carter Carey, Daring Dan, the young detective, came to where he saw the tracks turn off in a trail leading from the broad highway.

He did not make his discovery known to the messenger, but was determined to get rid of him.

Any one else than Daring Dan would have been utterly crushed by the news he had heard, but he rallied very quickly after he left the messenger.

Daring Dan thought quickly, and decided without any hesitation upon what he would do.

"After such a deed of lawlessness," muttered Dan, "Jesse James has certainly made his way back to his stronghold."

"I do not believe that he had any one with him to help him."

"These are the tracks of his horse, I am certain, and they go on this trail."

"This woodland trail will lead him through, after a few miles, into the lower highway which goes down into the territory where the James stronghold is located."

"No, after such an act as he has done, he will not tarry in this country, but, with the good lead that he had gained, make for his own country and his stronghold."

"I will follow him there."

"He knows me too well, however, for me to go as I am, and when I reach the highway below I will go into camp and assume a disguise which I am sure even Jesse James will not recognize me in."

"To do so, I've got to get another horse, but I will obtain him further along, as there are a few humble farms in this direction."

Having decided upon his course, which was a very reckless one indeed, Daring Dan set out at rapid track on the trail that Jesse James' horse had made.

Mile after mile the boy rode, and reaching the other highway, after a short search discovered the trail. It again left the main road and disappeared in the timber.

Houses were few and far between there, and Dan kept his horse at a half run until hours had been spent on the trail.

At last he came to a small cabin which was occupied by an old negro and his family.

"This is luck," said Dan to himself, "it tells me what I am to do."

He called to the old negro, and held an earnest conversation with him.

To his great delight, he learned that the man whose trail he followed had passed that way not two hours before.

He seemed to have ridden hard, and his horse was tired.

The wife of the old negro had given him his dinner, and had been well paid for it.

As the old colored settler had but one horse, the fugitive outlaw had not made an exchange with him for the animal he rode, tired though it was.

But Dan decided differently.

He handed the negro man a ten-dollar bill, and told him that he expected him to be as close mouthed as a lo-lan upon what he wanted him to do.

The colored woman also received a fee, and she, too, notided him in the plan which he wished to carry out.

The grandchildren of the old negro were too young to be able to tell anything, and their own parents were then away in the town.

Daring Dan entered the cabin, and an hour afterward came out of it in a disguise in which his best friend would not have known him.

As has been said, among his traps he had numerous disguises with him, given by the secret service chief, Willinkerton, in Chicago, when he had become a young detective in that corps of sleuths.

Dan had utilized his disguises. He had blackened every face with a black paste that would not wash off readily, assumed a gray wool wig, whitened his eyebrows, and was robed in a complete costume of the old negro merchant, which the wife had furnished him.

It was a clean costume, but rather sorry looking.

Leaving his own horse, when there was need for it, Dan mounted the old, woe-begone looking animal belonging to the old negro, who also loaned him a large pair of spectacles, which he kept for his Sunday reading, he said.

Thus equipped, and with two revolvers and a bag of provisions concealed about him, the young detective started boldly upon his way, hoping to come upon Jesse James, whom he felt sure was not making rapid progress in his attempt to escape.

The negro had told him that he seemed in no hurry whatever, and had spoken to him about returning to the neighborhood of the ranch country and securing a fresh horse.

In his strange and complete disguise, Daring Dan left the negro cabin with the determination to track the outlaw chief if he had to go into the neighborhood of the outlaw stronghold to do so.

It was late in the afternoon when he started upon his way, following the trail of the outlaw's horse which had alone passed along that way.

After a ride of a couple of miles the youth came

upon a farmer who was driving back to his home several stray cattle that he had been in search of and found miles from his home.

"Has yo seen any one goin' along this way, boss? A man on hossback?" asked the youth, in the best kind of negro dialect.

"Yes, seen a man back on the bog road just now, and he were a good-lookin, feller, too."

"Which way were he goin'?"

"Well, when I first seen him he was standing still in the road, but when I came up he asked me some questions and turned back toward the town."

"Is thar no way heah I kin head him off in de road, 'cause I wants ter see de gemman."

"Yes, you can take that trail yonder, and it will bring you out into the highway ahead of him, if he goes on toward the town, or mighty close after he has gone along."

"Tank you, sah," and Dan waited to hear no more, but set his sorry-looking horse into a sort of hop, skip and jump gait and got over the ground quite rapidly.

After a while he came out into the trail which led toward the town, but which seemed quite far from any habitation.

Dan could see down the road a long distance, and felt sure that Jesse James, with his tired horse, had not passed that way, if he was really the man he was in search of.

Looking back in the other direction, he discovered coming around the bend in the road no other person than the outlaw chief.

The boy was face to face with the man he hunted, and he did not shrink from him.

He simply turned his horse and rode toward the one he had discovered.

"There comes Jesse James. Now for the tug of war, for it is his life or mine," said Daring Dan, the young detective, as the bandit king came in sight.

Dan felt that an ordeal of death was before him, for then and there he had made up his mind to risk all in an attempt to capture a man whom he felt sure could be none other than the bandit king.

The strange horseman, as he came along, eyed the

supposed old negro curiously, and with a smile upon his face.

The make-up was certainly a choice one.

But as Daring Dan drew nearer to him, he was considerably surprised to discover that after all the horseman did not have the appearance of the Jesse James who had held up Bill Dudley's coach when he was upon it.

There was the velvet coat and slouch hat, carduroy pants and top boots, but the face seemed different.

The horseman's hair was not as long as that of the other had been; then, too, he was apparently not armed.

The mustache and beard which had made the face of Jesse James so marked and well known to all who had seen pictures of it, were missing.

Dan was in a quandary.

Was this Jesse James in disguise or was it not?

He drew his horse to a halt, and called out:

"Say, boss, day tells me dat that 'onory outlaw man, Marsa Jesse James, am skippin' through' dis country to hide himself.

"Has yo seen anything of him?"

"No, I have not. Do you wish to capture him?"

"Boss, I wishes to keep out of his way, dat is what I is anxious to do."

"I think it would be wise: but I have heard something about Jesse James being in the county, and I would dislike to come upon him myself just now."

"Is you got any guns, boss, with you?"

"Unfortunately, no, I have not."

"Den you has to take chances wid him if you sees him?"

"Yes, but I don't care to see him, or I don't care to be taken for him, either, as I am told that I look very much like him."

"So much like him that—you are my prisoner—Hands up!"

The words came as a surprise to the man.

He seemed wholly taken back: the negro dialect was gone.

The voice was stern and determined.

A revolver had sprung from the ragged suit of

clothes and covered the horseman with seemingly deadly intent.

"You are not what you seem to be," said the man.

"I am not—hands up!"

The horseman raised his hands.

"You are no negro, black as you are, and your voice and language does not belong to that race. I will obey you, but do you mean to hold me up?"

"I do mean it, as you are Jesse James."

The horseman laughed lightly.

"Whoever you are, you are off the trail. I have been taken for Jesse James before, but I live a couple of miles down the road, and if you go there with me my family can prove as much to you."

Daring Dan was nonplused.

The coolness of the man disconcerted him.

"Where are you from?" he asked.

"Hunting for stray cattle down toward the Territory."

"Where are you going?"

"Toward my home as I told you."

"Did you pass a man back on the highway driving stray cattle?"

"I did not."

"Did you halt at a negro's cabin some miles from here?"

"I did not."

"And you live on this road?"

"Yes, a couple of miles from here. Go with me and discover that you are wrong, and be my guest for the night."

"I will go with you and be sure that I am mistaken before I allow you to escape, for I believe you are Jesse James with your beard shaved off."

Again the horseman laughed.

"Keep your hands up as you ride along, for I'll kill you at the slightest show of resistance."

"I will obey, for I do not wish to be killed."

They had ridden along for a short distance, the horseman talking brightly with no fear that he could not clear himself of the charge made against him, when suddenly around the bend came two horsemen.

"Ah, there comes my brother now, and my brother

in-law," said the horseman, as he caught sight of the two men coming toward them.

Dan eyed the two horsemen closely as they approached.

They were good-looking fellows, and their horses were fresh.

Both seemed surprised at beholding the sporty-looking individual and the supposed old negro riding side by side.

As they drew near the horseman called out:

"Ho, Bob, I have been held up and arrested as Jesse James by this old coon here, but who is no coon, but a detective on the hunt for the bandit king."

The two men halted and laughed as they gazed at the pretended negro.

"He certainly can't be a negro, now I look at him," said one.

"Not he; but he has the idea that I am Jesse James in disguise, and I invited him back to the house to stay all night and discover that he was mistaken."

"I feel sure that I am mistaken," said Dan, "and I beg your pardon."

The youth was sure that he had made a sad mistake, but was convinced that if the horseman was not Jesse James he had at least held up his double.

"Oh, mistakes will occur, my friend. You will go on to the house with us?"

"No," said Dan, "I am going on down toward the Territory, and I would rather not have you speak of having seen any one looking like me."

"Certainly," said the horseman, and as Dan turned back on his trail the three halted in the road.

As he rode along on his way, Dan felt sure that it was his duty to go on back to the house and discover what he could in regard to the man who said he dwelt there with his family.

The more he thought of the horseman, the more he recalled that strange face, and he felt sure he had made a mistake in allowing him to go without further investigation.

He turned his horse about and rode back along the trail.

The two men they had met had evidently turned back with the one he had held up.

They were nowhere in sight, not one of the three.

A couple of miles further on, Dan came in sight of a very comfortable looking farmhouse.

The farmer was near the gate as he rode up.

He recognized the man as one he had seen several times at his father's house in town, and knew him by name, but the youth had never been that way before.

Riding up to the man, he asked him if three horsemen had arrived there.

"No."

"None been along the road?"

"No, people don't come this way often."

Dan had forgotten his negro dialect, and, alarmed at what he had heard, he at once gave himself away and came out in his true character.

He felt convinced that he had been tricked, not only by the horseman he had held up, but by the two men he had met.

They were doubtless in league with the horseman, and beyond all doubt his prisoner held for so short a time had been none other than Jesse James.

The young detective was almost broken down by the discovery, and, feeling that, mounted as he was, and in his disguise, he could accomplish nothing further that night, he accepted the invitation of the farmer to remain at his home.

This he did, and the next morning he discovered the county full of horsemen in search of Jesse James.

"That certainly was Jesse James I held as a prisoner," said Daring Dan, in deep disgust at being tricked, "and he has escaped into the country where he has his stronghold."

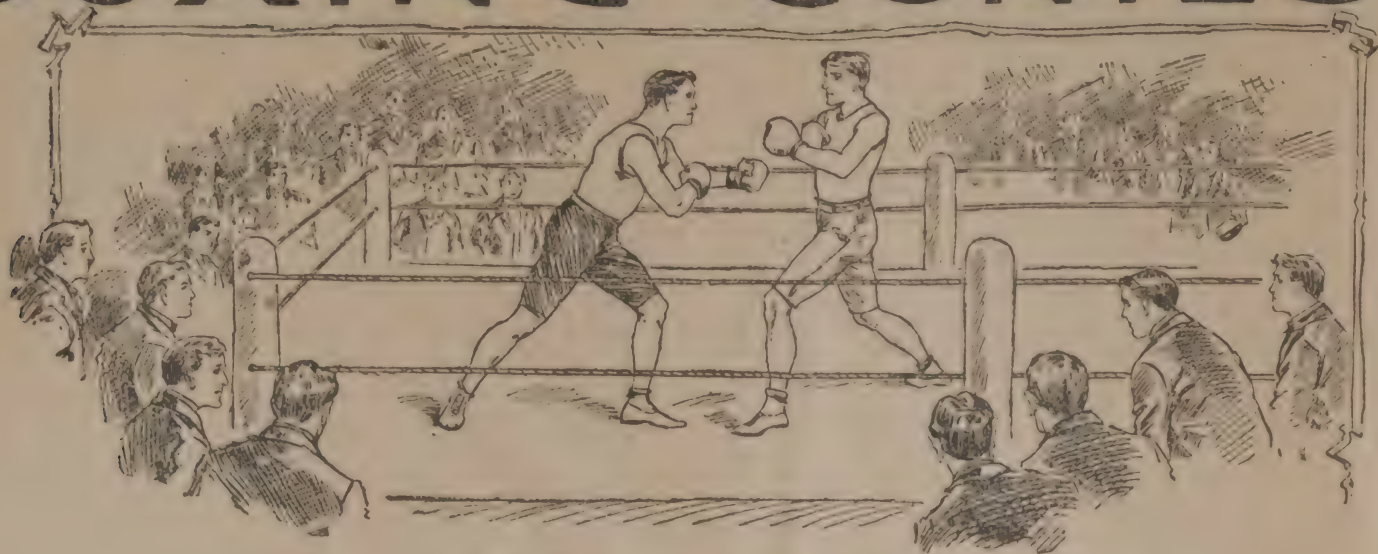
"I've got all my work to do over, but I do not give it up, and will yet bring Jesse James to bay."

And from that day Daring Dan, Pinkerton's young detective, was more determined than ever to set out upon the trail of the bandit king, who had so cleverly deceived him, and escaped from his clutches when he had him in his power.

THE END.

Next week's issue, No. 87, will contain "Jesse James' Mistake; or, the Boy Detective's Plot," in which is related the further adventures of the young Pinkerton detective. He did not give up his pursuit of the bandit, and it finally ended in a hot chase. Jesse James made a terrible mistake, one that nearly cost him his life. The full account will be given in next week's issue.

BOXING CONTEST



The new contest is well on.
It promises to be the best we ever had.
Be sure to get in it.
For rules and list of prizes, see page 31.

A Knockout in Four Rounds.

(By John E. Trevithick, Butte, Montana.)

It was arranged for a bout between two college boys to fight eight rounds. The boys' names were Sam Toy and Bill Tonkin. They were not on very good terms lately. The rounds were as follows:

First Round.—Sam feinted at Bill's face. Bill guarded his face, and received a heavy one in the stomach. Sam swung for head, but Bill ducked, and rushed Sam to the ropes. Bill received a half-arm jolt in the ribs, which staggered him. Sam followed up his chance and smashed Bill one in the eye with right, which knocked him over. The gong saved him.

Second Round.—Bill swung at head. Sam ducked, jumped back, then forward, and put all his strength to right swing, which knocked Bill over. He got up at the count of eight and smashed Sam over the eye. Sam rushed, and received a heavy left swing on the ribs, which knocked him back. As Bill rushed forward he received a left swing in the stomach that knocked him down, but he was up as the gong rang.

Third Round.—Sam feinted for stomach with his left. Bill guarded stomach and received a hard one in the face. Bill rushed and received a hard swing on the chin that knocked him back to the ropes. As Sam rushed forward, Bill sidestepped and Sam rushed to the ropes. Bill went up behind him and hit him a hard one on the ear. Sam turned and rushed at Bill, and swung for head, but missed, and received one on the stomach.

Fourth Round.—Bill swung for head, but Sam ducked, and put all his strength into a right swing to jaw, which put Bill down to the mat. He got up and rushed, but he received an uppercut that made him dizzy. Sam followed up his chance and gave Bill a short jab on the jaw, and a knock on the stomach that doubled Bill up. He fell to the mat, but got up at the count of eight. Sam gave him one straight from the shoulder. He went down and was counted out.

Knocked Out in the Third.

(By Joseph Kennedy, St. Louis, Mo.)

The following is a fair description of a pugilistic encounter between two boys, King and Boschert. It only lasted three rounds and Boschert is supposed to be a king for true. By rounds:

First Round.—King and Boschert stepped into the ring and shook hands. King made a pass for Boschert's jaw and was blocked by Boschert, who succeeded in slanting one blow in King's ribs. King tried to block, but in doing so he dropped his guard, and Boschert took advantage of this and beat King on the stomach and body. King was looking tired when the gong sounded.

Second Round.—Boschert led for the face and was blocked by King, and everybody thought King was trying to get close to him and land him, but he was not. King made a pass for Boschert, who sidestepped, and landed a right to King's jaw, and King seemed dazed. Boschert followed King up and King was reeling when the gong sounded.

Third Round.—Boschert rushed King from start to finish. Boschert landed two blows on King's body, and followed this up by hooking King on the jaw. King was groggy, and as he was ready to send a blow, Boschert hit him one to the jaw and stomach, and King got up and Boschert started to pound him. King fell to avoid punishment. His managers threw up the sponge.

A Quick Finish.

(By George E. Nettle, Springfield, Ill.)

Here is the story of a fight that I was an eye-witness to. The names of the men who were to fight were Sandy and Slavin. They had been rivals for a long time, and at last decided to have it out by having a good fist fight.

Sandy started with a rush at Slavin, but Slavin met him with a left-hand swing and laid him flat. Sandy rose slowly, looking stupefied. He then made another rush

for Slavin, but was met with a right-hand jab and staggered. He recovered himself quickly, and landed a terrific right-hander on Slavin's jaw. Slavin staggered, but made a rush for Sandy, landing straight right-hander above the heart. Sandy fainted and was carried away.

A Hot Contest.

(By Geo. P. Langmead, Baltimore, Md.)

The best bout I ever witnessed was between two members of the Ariel Athletic Club of Baltimore. Joe Smithers was champion of the club, the other members being afraid to box him. Billy Rochester was a new member, having joined the club but a week after Joe claimed to be champion. One night when all the members were present, Billy got up and said: "I hear that Joe Smithers claims to be champion of the club. As he has not fought me yet, I challenge him to a twenty-round bout for the championship." A great cheer went up, for Billy was the first one that ever dared challenge Joe before. Of course Joe was willing to have the bout, so arrangements were made to pull it off on the following Friday. When Friday came everything was in readiness for the fight.

The fight by rounds:

First Round.—After shaking hands, the men sparred for a second and came together for a rapid exchange, with honors about even. Billy lands a left on head and they clinch and wrestle until separated by the referee. Joe rushes and Billy meets him with a straight left jab to the mouth. As the gong sounds Billy lands hard right and left to head.

Second Round.—Joe rushes and is met with a left on chin. Joe lands a hard uppercut with left. They clinch. After several blows, Billy jars his head back with a right uppercut. Little else done.

Third Round.—Joe lands a hard left on head. Billy does some pretty blocking of Joe's rapid right and left swings. A rapid exchange follows, and they come to a clinch. Billy lands a right to head and follows it a second later with a left to the other side. Joe lands a hard right on the stomach and Billy counters on the face. In the mix-up, Billy lands a hard uppercut to the chin, followed by a hard left to ribs, which makes Joe groggy.

Fourth Round.—Billy lands a right to face and left to same place. Joe makes Billy grunt with a right to stomach. Billy lands left on stomach and crosses right to head. Billy uppercuts with right; Billy feints with left and lands right on jaw.

Fifth Round.—Joe's face is bleeding profusely soon after the round opens. He begins his usual series of rushes and is met with hard left jabs. Billy lands a series of hard rights and lefts and a hard right uppercut. As the gong sounds Joe is staggering and apparently helpless.

Rounds six, seven, eight and nine were repetitions of rushes by Joe, while Billy watches him like a cat, and lands hard and often. Each round appears to be the last, but Joe comes up strong after each rest.

Tenth Round.—Billy lands a straight right on stomach and follows it with a right on jaw, which puts Joe on Queer street. Joe lands a left on face, but it lacks steam. Billy lands a hard left and a succession of rights and

lefts on head. A right on the jaw floors him, but the gong sounds before the count is finished.

Eleventh Round.—A few seconds after the round opens Billy lands a hard right on the jaw, and, as Joe staggers, he lands two more hard rights. Joe falls like a log, but is up at the count of eight. Billy is after him like a tiger and lands a succession of lefts and rights on the jaw, and again Joe goes down, and gets up at the count of eight. As the gong rings he is staggering around the ring apparently dazed and helpless.

Twelfth Round.—Joe goes down again and takes nine of the count, and four seconds before the gong sounds is floored again with a right on the jaw.

Thirteenth and Fourteenth Rounds.—Joe is down in each and Billy continues to rain blows on his jaw, but he comes up comparatively fresh after each rest, and lands some good blows.

Fifteenth Round.—Billy lands a hard right and Joe rushes to clinch. They break away and spar. Billy crosses his right over as Joe starts to rush and lands a terrific blow on the point of the jaw. Joe drops like a log, and is counted out.

When Joe was counted out, all the members of the club rushed into the ring and carried Billy upon their shoulders. Billy held the championship until the club disbanded.

Corbett and Jeffries.

(By Joseph Brogan, New York City.)

I wish to inform you about the fight I saw between J. Jeffries and J. Corbett. First of all Jef gave Corbett a blow under the chin. Then Corbett gave him one in the chest. Jef, with his great swing, knocked Corbett over the ropes. By this time the fight became exciting. Corbett let Jef have a left in the jaw, which sent him to the floor. The referee counted five when Jef got up. He swung at Corbett but was blocked, Corbett punched Jef in the nose. Now Corbett was winning. It was the sixth round and they had to fight three more rounds. Jef hit Corbett in the eye, which gave him a blinker, but this is not much noticed in a fight. Here Corbett got mad and made a rush at Jef. But Jef put out his fist and caught him in the solar plexus, and Corbett lay down. It was the ending of the ninth round and Corbett kept down till the referee counted ten. Jef won the fight.

Art and Julius.

(By Fred Leidlein, Saginaw, Mich.)

For a long time the boys were expecting a fight, and at last the time came. A place was decided on, and a ring made.

First Round.—Both entered the ring eager for a fight. Art led with a right in the ribs; Julius hit for Art's ear. Art ducked and got an uppercut on the nose. Art returned it with a left for the stomach, but it was blocked. They clinched. When they broke, Art hit Julius on the ear. Gong.

Second Round.—Julius led with a right for Art's chin, but it was blocked, and he received an uppercut. Art tried to follow it with a left for the ear, but it was blocked

and he got a jab in the mouth. Art hit Julius in the ribs and tried to follow it with a right for the stomach, but was blocked, and he got a jab in the nose which made his nose bleed. Gong.

Third Round.—Julius led with a left for the ribs, but it was blocked, and he got one on the nose. It was followed with a left on the ear. Julius gave Art an uppercut which made him stagger, but he recovered himself and hit Julius in the stomach and tried to follow it with a left for the ear, but it was ducked, and he got a right on the chin. Gong.

Fourth Round.—Both were tired, and so they rested up. Art led, putting one for the ribs, but it was blocked, and he got an uppercut. It was followed by a jab in the ribs. Art hit Julius in the mouth, and followed it with a jab in the stomach. They clinched. Gong.

Fifth Round.—They went at it hard, Julius hit for Art's nose, but was blocked. Got two in the ribs. Julius went for Art, got one on the smeller, but took Art on the ear. They clinched. When they parted some one spoke. Art turned, and got one on the chin, which floored him. He was counted out, though he tried hard to get up.

A Lively Bout.

(By Raymond Young, Cleveland, Ohio.)

I here write a few lines of a fight I witnessed. The contestants were Fred Huntington and Bob Knauss.

First Round.—Bob led off by a short right jab on the jaw. Fred made a right swing for Bob's nose, but was blocked. Fred got a good punch on the chest that staggered him.

Second Round.—Bob gave Fred an uppercut on the nose that brought the claret. Fred swung for Bob's face, but missed; in return he got a stiff punch in the stomach that doubled him up.

Third Round.—Both were tired, but they pounded got one on the chest. Fred got angry and gave Bob a punch on the nose. Bob gave Fred a punch on the nose that knocked him out.

Almost Equal.

(By Clarence Morgan, Ellsworth, Me.)

Otis Webber and Charles Brown were the contestants. They shook hands and put on the gloves.

First Round.—Gong sounded, and both men walked slowly to center of ring. Webber landed a right on Brown's nose, making blood flow freely. Brown made a terrific right swing for Webber's face, which was cleverly blocked. Brown received Webber's left on the jaw which caused him to stagger. Brown gave Webber a dandy in the ribs.

Second Round.—Webber was very cool and entered again, leading for Brown's face with left, followed with right to jaw, which came near putting Brown out.

Third Round.—Both were tired, but they pounded

away at each other. Brown sent one to the heart, but was blocked. Webber gave Brown an uppercut on the jaw and weakened him pretty badly. Webber put one to the ear, another to the nose and blood rushed forth.

Fourth Round.—They were fresh in this round, and started by running each other around the ring. They clinched and were separated. Brown gave a blow to the chest and Webber staggered, and then gave Brown good ones in the ribs. Brown sent a stunner to the wing but was blocked, and received a punch in the face. They pounded each other in the face until Webber sent a double blow to the side. Brown went down and was counted out.

So Otis Webber won after a hard battle. Webber weighed one hundred and twenty-five pounds, and Brown one hundred and thirty pounds.

Little John and Fo'ey.

(By Harry Ward; Halifax, N. S.)

At 7.30 A. M. Foley entered the ring, smoking a cigar; at 8.05 A. M. Little John entered. Both took their corners, and the fight began at 8.15 A. M.

First Round.—Gong sounded and both men walked slowly to center of ring, and, after shaking hands, resumed their seats again. At the second gong they reached the center of the ring and Little John led a terrific right for Foley's face, which was very cleverly blocked, and Little John received Foley's right in the ribs. Little John again led with right, which was also blocked, and, making a sidestep, he jabbed Little John above the left eye, which made a nasty gash and the blood poured down his face in torrents, just as the referee called time.


Second Round.—Little John was very cool, leading again for Foley's face, followed by right for jaw, which came pretty near putting Foley out. Foley led left for ribs, followed with right for nose, which brought blood and made Little John very dizzy.

Third Round.—Both exchanged blows very freely, and Little John led a left for Foley's ribs, but was blocked, and received a blow on the jaw, which made him reel as time was called.

Fourth Round.—Foley made a spring, landing left to nose and right to chest. Little John made a quick sidestep and landed terrific right on Foley's jaw, knocking out three teeth.

Fifth Round.—Little John led right for Foley's nose, which was blocked, and he received a jab in the ribs. Little John led left for nose, followed by right for wind, which landed below the belt. Foley turned to referee to claim foul, and Little John hit him on the jaw, and he went down. He got up quite dizzy, led for Little John's jaw, but received a terrific right over left eye which knocked him out.

The decision was given to Little John.

 \$1 worth of Tricks & Make-ups, and paid for 25 cents stamps or silver. A nice Menasha or Full Beard, Irish or Side Whiskers, any color, better Spirit Gum to stick them on. Box of Baran Cork to blacken up, for Rubber Mouth, big teeth, secret & apparatus for performing the great vanishing half-dollar trick. This big offer is to get your address to send my large list, catalog of plays, rings, winks & agn. latest novelties. Mention paper you saw this in and I will also put in a Heavy GOLD plate finger Ring FREE, post free. Address Chas. Marshall, M.B., Lockport, N.Y.

JESSE JAMES STORIES.

(LARGE SIZE.)

The Best Stories Published of the Famous Western Outlaw.

- 47—Jesse James Foiled; or, The Pinkertons' Best Play.
- 48—The James Boys' Steamboat; or, The River Cruise of the Bandit Brothers.
- 49—Jesse James' Jubilee; or, The Celebration at the Bandits' Castle.
- 50—Jesse James' Double Duel; or, The Price of a Life.
- 51—Jesse James' Kidnaping Plot; or, The Set-to in Tehama County.
- 52—Jesse James' Detective Decoy; or, The Spy in the Stronghold.
- 53—Jesse James' Stern Chase; or, The Detective's Stratagem.
- 54—Jesse James' Running Fight; or, Trapped at Bear Gulch.
- 55—Jesse James and the Demon Trailer; or, The Duelist Detective.
- 56—Jesse James Dead or Alive; or, The Man Hunters of the Mines.
- 57—Jesse James' Death Warning; or, Paying a Life Debt.
- 58—Jesse James at the Stake; or, Doomed to Die by Fire.
- 59—Jesse James' Trail of Death; or, The Hold-Up of the Yankee Hearse.
- 60—Jesse James' Red Rival; or, The Miner of Madman's Mountain.
- 61—Jesse James' Detective Deal; or, The Mysterious Scout of Fort Fearless.
- 62—Jesse James' Unmasked Foe; or, Playing the Same Game.
- 63—Jesse James' Death Vendetta; or, The Robber Rangers of the Rio Grande.
- 64—Jesse James' Discovery; or, The Gold Trail of Death Pass.
- 65—Jesse James' Double Trouble; or, At the Mercy of a Foe.
- 66—Jesse James' Death Track; or, The Nemesis on the Traitor's Trail.
- 67—Jesse James' Doomed Dozen; or, The Hold-Up Avengers.
- 68—Jesse James' Avenging Hand; or, The Boy Jockey's Terrible Secret.
- 69—Jesse James' Flight for Life; or, The Red Run of the Robber Riders.
- 70—Jesse James' Haunted Life; or, Tracked by a Phantom Sleuth.
- 71—Jesse James' Railroad Round-Up; or, The Doom of the Detectives.
- 72—Jesse James' Cowboy Clan; or, The Master of the Mysterious Ranch.
- 73—Jesse James' Pitiless Pursuers; or, The Black Avengers of a Wrong.
- 74—Jesse James' Saloon Hold-Up; or, Gathering in the Spoils.
- 75—Jesse James' Girl Foe; or, Across the Dead Line.
- 76—Jesse James' Diamond Deal; or, Robbing the Red Hands.
- 77—Jesse James' Devil's Dungeon; or, The Lost Treasure of the Old Mission.
- 78—Jesse James Afloat; or, Holding Up the Coast Towns.
- 79—Jesse James' Desperate Dash; or, Raiding the Ranches.
- 80—Jesse James' Lone Hand; or, The Reckless Rider's Red Run.
- 81—Jesse James' Red Retribution; or, The Outlaws' Fatal Brand.
- 82—Jesse James' Demon Shadower; or, Under Many Masks.
- 83—Jesse James' Boy Shadower; or, The Bandit King at Bay.
- 84—Jesse James Hard Driven; or, The Boy Sleuth's Black Flag.

All of the above numbers always on hand. If you cannot get them from your newsdealer, five cents a copy will bring them to you by mail, postpaid. STREET & SMITH, Publishers, 233 William Street, New York.

LOOK AT THIS PRIZE OFFER

30
Sets
of
Boxing
Gloves.



30
Sets
of
Boxing
Gloves

GIVEN AWAY AS PRIZES

In the New JESSE JAMES WEEKLY Boxing Contest
that opens this week.

Two Pairs of Gloves to Each Set...

SPALDING BOXING GLOVES of the HIGHEST QUALITY. They are well worth winning. Every American boy should understand boxing, and the only way to learn the game is to put on the gloves yourself.

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO TO WIN A SET

Is to write a description of any bout you have witnessed or participated in and send it with the accompanying coupon, properly filled out, to

JESSE JAMES WEEKLY

Care of

STREET & SMITH

238 WILLIAM STREET, NEW YORK

Made after the Corbett pattern, of soft craven tan leather, well padded with elastic wrist bands. These are GENUINE

THIS CONTEST CLOSES MARCH 1st, 1903.

COUPON

JESSE JAMES WEEKLY BOXING CONTEST No. 4.

Name.....

No..... Street.....

City or Town.....

State.....

JESSE JAMES STORIES



Jesse James.

WE were the first publishers in the world to print the famous stories of the James Boys, written by that remarkable man, W. B. Lawson, whose name is a watchword with our boys. We have had many imitators, and in order that no one shall be deceived in accepting the spurious for the real, we are now publishing the best stories of the James Boys, by Mr. Lawson, in a New Library entitled "The Jesse James Stories," one of our big five-cent weeklies, and a sure winner with the boys. A number of issues have already appeared, and these which follow will be equally good; in fact, the best of their kind in the world.

STREET & SMITH, Publishers, New York.

NICK CARTER STORIES



Nick Carter.

THE best known detective in the world is Nick Carter. Stories by this noted sleuth are issued regularly in "Nick Carter Weekly" (price five cents), and all his work is written for us. It may interest the patrons and readers of the Nick Carter Series of Detective Stories to know that these famous stories will soon be produced upon the stage under unusually elaborate circumstances. Arrangements have just been completed between the publishers and Manager F. C. Whitney, to present the entire set of Nick Carter stories in dramatic form. The first play of the series will be brought out next fall.

STREET & SMITH, Publishers, New York.

BUFFALO BILL STORIES

The only publication authorized by the Hon. Wm. F. Cody (Buffalo Bill).



Buffalo Bill.

WE were the publishers of the first story ever written of the famous and world-renowned Buffalo Bill, the great hero whose life has been one succession of exciting and thrilling incidents combined with great successes and accomplishments, all of which will be told in a series of grand stories which we are now placing before the American Boys. The popularity they have already obtained shows what the boys want, and is very gratifying to the publishers.

STREET & SMITH, Publishers, New York.

DIAMOND DICK STORIES



Diamond Dick.

THE celebrated Diamond Dick stories can only be found in "Diamond Dick, Jr., the Boys' Best Weekly." Diamond Dick and his son Bertie are the most unique and fascinating heroes of Western romance. The scenes, and many of the incidents, in these exciting stories are taken from real life. Diamond Dick stories are conceded to be the best stories of the West, and are all copyrighted by us. The weekly is the same size and price as this publication, with handsome illuminated cover. Price, five cents.

STREET & SMITH, Publishers, New York.